

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks Following a Meeting With Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov of Russia

May 7, 2009

President Obama. I just want to make a brief statement. I just had an excellent conversation with Minister Lavrov. He and Secretary Clinton and the rest of our foreign policy teams have been meeting throughout the day. This caps off many of these conversations, all in preparation for a visit that President Medvedev and I have discussed to take place sometime this summer.

As I've said before, I think we have an excellent opportunity to reset the relationship between the United States and Russia on a whole host of issues, from nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation, the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, how we approach Iran, how we approach the Middle East, commercial ties between the two countries, and how we address the financial crisis that has put such a strain on the economies of all countries around the world.

And President Medvedev has an excellent representative in Minister Lavrov. We very much appreciate his strong work in trying to move the relationship forward, and I am hopeful that the meetings that we've had so far and the meetings that we expect to have throughout the course of this year will be of mutual benefit to both countries.

So thank you very much for taking the time.

Foreign Minister Lavrov. Thank you, Mr. President. And I just would like briefly to reiterate that we are indeed working very hard on developing the documents which you and President Medvedev authorized us to do when you met in London. I think we work in a very pragmatic, businesslike way on the basis of the common interest whenever our positions coincide and on the basis of respect to each other whenever we have disagreements, trying to narrow those disagreements for the benefit of our countries and the international stability.

And I can convey to you once again that President Medvedev is really looking forward to meeting you in Moscow this July.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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